



The Weekly Page

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 6

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Pages Learn About Legislature



Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: **governing society is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day.** As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

Pages write bills, hold mock hearings

Pages worked individually or in small groups to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. Criteria for making a legislative solution work was discussed before students selected issues to research and develop. Then they used bill templates on class computers to formulate official-looking documents in preparation for a mock committee hearing on Thursday. Some topics for policy bills included high school start times, athletic eligibility guidelines, smoking, and transportation. Pages read their bills and “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee.

Card companies wreck student credit

Olympia – House Bill 1555 was introduced yesterday by Representative Nathan Voyer. “This bill addresses the issue of aggressive marketing by credit card companies on college campuses and will reduce their influence and add an age limit on those who receive credit cards,” said Rep. Voyer. “College students are wrecking their future by having large credit card debt. By the time they graduate, they will not be prepared for a success,” he said. “Each fall, as 17 million college students flood the nation’s campuses, they will be greeted by swarms of credit card marketers. Some 75 percent of students have credit cards,” he said. If this bill becomes law, no student under the age of 21 will be allowed to get a card.

Drivers forced to hang up or pay up

Olympia – House Bill 1795 was introduced yesterday by Representative Reagan Colyer. “This bill addresses the issue of driving while using cellular phones and will reduce the number of accidents caused by drivers distracted in this way,” said Rep. Colyer. Should the bill be passed, drivers found using handheld or hands-free cell phones will be written a ticket and will receive a fine. Costs to enforce the new law will be covered by the revenue from these fines and will include possible construction of more designated rest areas for drivers, should a call or text message be urgent.



Doggie do crime, doggie do time!

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Jason Agtarap and Jessica Eckstrom introduced House Bill 1005, which addresses the issue of dog attacks. “The bill is a good one because it will decrease the number of bites and fatalities caused by dog attacks in Washington State, making neighborhoods and towns across the state safer,” said Rep. Agtarap. There are over 800,000 dog bites in the U.S. every year, and one out of every six are serious enough for medical attention.

Dog attacks are the fifth most frequent cause of visits by children to the emergency room. If this bill becomes law, dogs that are not under the constant watch of their owner must be restrained or remain indoors



until owners return. It will be illegal for dogs to roam around unattended. Dogs will only be let loose when in the presence of the owner. "This is a great law that will benefit many people. Now, your mailman won't have to be afraid to deliver letters with a pit bull in the neighborhood!" said Rep. Eckstrom.

Food industry to clean up its act

Olympia- Yesterday, Senators Gillian Bishop and Annamarie Cosgrove introduced Senate Bill 5000 which addresses the issue of food safety and sanitation issues. “This bill is necessary and beneficial to society because it will reduce the number of cases involving food borne illnesses and deaths from diseases contracted from food, such as *E. coli* and *salmonella*,” said Sen. Bishop. The bill will place fines on restaurants and manufactur-



ing centers that fail to comply with sanitation requirements enumerated in the bill. Food preparation

workers will be required to have clean hands, and factory workers will be required to wear gloves. A newly appointed health inspector will be in charge of making sure that these businesses comply. With the passing of this bill, senators expect that Washington will become a healthier state and will do their part in reducing the 9,000 food poisoning deaths that occur across the country every year.

Senator stiffens hunting regulations



Olympia – Senate Bill 5757 was introduced yesterday by Senator Alec Rockseth. “This bill addresses the issue of forest safety and will reduce the number of hikers injured in hunting accident,” said Sen. Rockseth. This bill will require any hunter under the age of 16 to be accompanied by an experienced adult hunter. In

addition, all hikers must wear fluorescent orange clothing while hiking on trails. The senator called for an examination of hiking and hunting areas and felt the state needed to separate any overlaps where possible. The bill was the result of a recent accident where a 14-year-old boy hunting with his 16-year-old brother mistook a hiker for a bear and killed her.

Turn off phones; turn on brains

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Aubrey Chase and Skylar Aieta introduced Senate Bill 6732, which addresses the use of cell phones while driving. “The bill is a good one because it will better enforce the current law by

changing it to a primary offence,” said Sen. Chase. “The problem with using a cell phone while driving is, if you're texting, your eyes are on the phone and not on the road,” said Sen. Aieta. The proposed bill would make it a primary offence to drive while texting, e-mailing, or talking on a cell phone handset. It would also make it a primary offence for someone with an intermediate driver's license or a learner's permit to use any wireless communications device while driving.



Credit card companies curtailed

Olympia – Senate Bill 5051 was introduced yesterday by Senator David K.Chen. “This bill addresses the issue of aggressive credit card companies and will prevent college students from



falling into debt,” said Sen. Chen. The senator created this bill when he found out from concerned constituents that credit card companies were marketing their cards to college students who have little or no income.

“Aggressive companies entice students to use credit cards by offering free gifts such as T-shirts, iPods, and food,” he said. “Before students know it, they are spending beyond their means and they leave college with huge debt.” If this bill becomes law, card companies must receive permission to advertise on campus and may not accept applications from students with income lower than \$500 per month.



Bill proposes new standards for the WIAA

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Mark Allen, Blake Wiley, and Nick Vaishampayan introduced Senate Bill 5121, which addresses the issue of high school athletic eligibility. “The bill is a good one because it will help students who play sports graduate on time and remain on sports teams,” said Sen. Allen. Formerly, the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA), which oversees all high school sports teams, set a minimum GPA of 2.0 and allowed students to play with two failing classes. With this bill, the WIAA standard would no longer allow any athlete to continue playing if s/he is failing even one subject. Athletic directors will also be required to make monthly grade checks. “In 1984, the Texas Legislature ratified the ‘No Pass, No Play’ rule, which would require Texas students had to pass with a grade of 70 percent to be able to play,” said Sen. Wiley, “That rule actually enhanced the athletics program. The standard was raised, and the students rose to meet it.” Using that as an example, the sponsors hope to improve Washington academics as well as make athletic competition more fair.



Shoppers to pay for plastic bags

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Melissa Shoop and Wyatt Arledge introduced House Bill 3849, which addresses the issue of plastic bag disposal. “The bill is a good one because it will encourage people to get rid of the plastic bags properly,” said Rep. Arledge. The bill will require stores to charge a de-

posit of 25 cents for each plastic bag used. Shoppers can then return the bags to the store and get a reimbursement of 25 cents. Stores will then properly dispose of the bags or reuse them. “Perhaps this will give homeless people a chance to earn some money by cleaning up the streets looking for bags to return to stores,” said Rep. Shoop.



Academics before athletics

Olympia – Senate Bill 5679 was introduced yesterday by Senators Sierra Tryon and Keegan Monson. “This bill addresses the issue of high school athletic eligibility and will increase the chance of college acceptance by holding the student to a grade standard BEFORE they are allowed to play sports,” said Sen. Tryon. Most districts in the state currently require the student



to be passing four or more classes and maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0. However, most colleges will turn down an applicant who focused on sports but had a low GPA. This bill would require high school athletes to maintain a 3.0 average at all times and pass all classes. If athletes fail to meet these requirements, they will have one week of probation to get their grade up. If unable to do so, they will be removed from the team for the rest of the season.

Sen. Tripp out to help sleepy teens

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Connor Tripp introduced Senate Bill 6116, which addresses the issue of teen sleep deprivation and high school success. “The bill is a good one because it will increase school test scores and prevent traffic accidents,” said Sen. Tripp. Many teenagers do not get the 9.5 hours of sleep they need each night because of early high school start times, according to the senator. This bill would require all public high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. “Over half of the 100,000 motor vehicle crashes each year are caused by fatigued drivers between the ages of 16 -25. Starting school an hour later could improve academic as well as driving records of our teens,” said Sen. Tripp.



Earning your way to play

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Emily Herde and Madeline Roberts introduced House Bill 1244, which addresses the issue of high school athletics. “The bill is a good one because it holds students to high standards that we are positive they can meet and will create many opportunities for success,” said Rep. Roberts. The current standards for student athletes are extremely low, allowing a student to participate in sports even when s/he isn’t on track to graduate, according to the representatives. The new bill will only allow students to participate in sports when they are passing all of their classes, ensuring that they are prepared to earn their high school diploma. “Many people were concerned that students would not be able to reach these high expectations,” said Rep. Herde, “but the WIAA has not been emphasizing academic success with these athletes. This new bill will challenge kids to rise to their potential.”



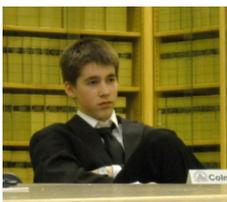
Commit crime, convict, punish... repeat

Olympia – Senate Bill 5001 was introduced yesterday by Senators Austin Sita and Alex Vaishampayan. “This bill addresses the issue of repeat offenders and will lower recidivism in our state,” said Sen. Vaishampayan. Studies show that young offenders were not deterred by the threat of punishment. In addition, a repeat offender has an average of 3.94 convictions, with 65.9 percent of men committing crimes again and 53.6 percent of women repeating offences. “Studies have shown that with organized restitution programs, repeat offender rates have dropped by 27 percent,” said Sen. Sita. “Washington has been sitting idle for too long, and now we plan to do something about it,” said Sen. Vaishampayan..



House to end frivolous police charges

Olympia – House Bill 3650 was introduced yesterday by Representative Colman Miller. “This bill addresses the issue of law enforcement and community relationships and will decrease the number of complaints filed against police officers,” said Rep. Miller. There are too many frivolous complaints about use of force by the police, according to the representative. “Investigations into unnecessary force



increased by 50 percent over the last decade. Out of 165 charges against police investigated in 2005, no officer was ever found to have broken any rules or regulation by their actions,” said Rep. Miller. This bill will require all departments to display their rules and regulations, provide examples of unnecessary force, and to educate the public regarding the closely observed regulations the officers must follow.

Can transportation systems meet future demands?

Olympia – Senate Bill 6699 was introduced yesterday by Senator Rafael Regan. “This bill addresses the issue of transportation in the Puget Sound area and will improve future regional systems,” said Sen. Regan. If this bill becomes law, commissions will be established in high-population areas to recommend alternative ways to travel. As of April 1, 2009, the population increased by 41,800 people in the Puget Sound area over the previous year, reaching the current estimated total of 3,674,800 people. With the population reaching this number, the bus systems that serve many suburbs are at capacity. The number of people climbing aboard King County Metro has gone up 20 percent in the last three years, according to the senator. “With the increasing projected population the need for alternative transportation is getting stronger and stronger,” he said. If this bill becomes law, the legislature will provide grant money to fund electric trains for the Sounder Commuter route, the extension of the train line to downtown Olympia, and rapid transit between Bellevue, Seattle and Tacoma.



Smoking in motor vehicles banned

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Alex Compeau and James Davies introduced Senate Bill 6842, which addresses the issue of smoking in vehicles with children as passengers. “The bill is a good one because it will keep children of the state healthy,” said Sen. Davies. Second-hand smoke from adult drivers can harm young passengers. It contains as many as 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cancer causing. In order to keep the children of the state healthy, the legislature will ban smoking in motor vehicles when minors are present. According to the senators, this will be a secondary law for one year, then it will change to a primary law. “This will give our citizens time to change their bad habits,” said Sen. Compeau.



No need to eat at the edge of your seat

Olympia – Senate Bill 7315 was introduced yesterday by Senators Ina Dash and Emma Cronshaw. “This bill addresses the issue of food-borne illnesses and will reduce the number of restaurant-related sicknesses in our state,” said Sen. Cronshaw. In 1993, 206 patients were confirmed with *E. coli* infections in the state, 144 were hospitalized and three died. Each year there are between 10-25 cases of listeriosis, an infection of the bloodstream or lining covering the brain and spinal cord that can be very serious. “The resolution is for all restaurants to publically display sanitary inspection scores at the entrance where it is clearly visible, like they do in California. By posting a inspection grade near the entrance, the Health Department will be providing information that consumers can use to make informed choices about where to eat out. Food borne illness is a serious issue and is preventable,” said Sen. Dash.



Bill aims to protect hikers in wake of shooting

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Kyle Gionet, McClintok Miller, and Luke Olsen. introduced House Bill 2507, which addresses the issue of hunting regulations. “The bill is a good one because it will protect the hikers of Washington state while providing a better licensing system for hunters,” said Rep. Gionet. Recently a 14-year-old shot and killed a hiker only 120 yards away, thinking she was a bear. “The bill will establish a minimum solo hunting age of 18 and will also promote hiker-hunter awareness because most of Washington's most popular hiking trails are also located in hunting areas,” said Rep. Miller. The bill has passed through the Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness committee and is expected to pass through the House with a unanimous vote.



Leib wants to decrease morning grumpiness in teens

Olympia – Senate Bill 5002 was introduced yesterday by Senator Hannah Leib. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprived teenagers and will help increase the hours of sleep and overall achievement in adolescents,” said Sen. Leib. Biologically, adolescents require at least 9 hours of sleep, but on the whole most teenagers only get 6-7 hours of sleep, according to several scientific studies. By pushing back start times for high schools, daytime alertness in students improves along with test scores. Dropout rates decrease along with health related problems such as depression. “Sleep occupies one third of our lives and scientific research documents the critical role that sleep plays in all aspects of growth, learning and well being,” said Helene Emsellem, Medical Director of Center for Sleep and Wake Disorders. This bill will require all public high school to start no earlier than 8:15 a.m.



Childhood obesity continues to be a problem in the state

Olympia – Senate Bill 7777 was introduced yesterday by Senators Megan Wood, Abi Wieland, and Bailey Weatherby. “This bill addresses the issue of childhood obesity and will encourage children to lead a healthier lifestyle and cause a decrease in overweight young people,” said Sen. Wood. The senators believe that there are too many obese children in our state who have a much higher risk of developing health issues such as diabetes and heart and artery disease. According to the 2003-2004 National Survey of Children's Health, 10.8 percent of 10-17 year olds in Washington State are overweight. The senators are confident that this bill will help the state’s children live a healthier lifestyle and lower the percent of obesity by requiring public schools to provide only healthy choices for lunches, such as fresh, organic and low-fat foods. It will also require that all children receive some form of exercise for a minimum of one hour per day.



Drunk drivers dunked by proposed bill

Olympia – House Bill 3745 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Whitney Marshall and Shannon Acker.



“This bill addresses the issue of highway casualties and will reduce the numbers of drunk drivers on the road,” said Rep. Acker. The bill would require that all persons found guilty of DUI must drive with a yellow license plate to warn other people

that they should be more cautious when around that car. Yellow license plates will cost an additional \$70 and will be paid by the convicted driver. “In 2006, there were 294 alcohol related traffic fatalities in our state,” said Rep. Marshall. “Nearly one in 139 licensed drivers in the U.S. is arrested for drunk driving each year. That is too many,” said Rep. Acker.

Change in school start times aims to increase success rates

Olympia – House Bill 2224 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Jessica Olsen, Jessica Canfield, and Kathryn Gouker.

“This bill addresses the issue of teen sleep deprivation and the lack of information about the importance of sleep. It should correct unhealthy sleeping habits as well as increase success rates in high schools,” said Rep. Olsen. The National Sleep Foundation found that 60 percent of children under the age of 18 complained of being tired during the day, according to their parents, and 15 percent said they fell asleep at school during the year. The bill will require all high schools to begin the day no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and will require health classes to include information on the sleep habits of teens and the health risks of poor sleep habits. “With the delay in high school start times, I hope to see more students engaged in class work and to see high school grades improve,” said Rep. Gouker.



Bill sponsors hope to decrease state’s obesity rate

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Jefferson Lee, Brady Friedrich, and Wade Whitton introduced Senate Bill 7666, which addresses the issue of obesity.

“The bill is a good one because it boosts the health of



Washington State by decreasing its obesity rate,” said Sen. Lee. The percent of adults in Washington State who are obese has more than doubled over the past 17 years, increasing from 10 percent in 1990 to 25 percent in 2007. To turn this trend around, this bill will require adults to designate 30 minutes out of their day for exercise and eat more balanced meals as well as not take in more calories than they burn. This bill will be enforced by the creation of the Washington Obese and Overweight Control Agency (WOOCA).

Smoke at home or don't smoke at all!

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Allysia Romo-Evans and Clara O'Brien introduced House Bill 3001, which addresses the issue of smoking. “The bill is a good one because it will save and better the lives of many, as well as improve our environment,” said Rep. Allysia Romo-Evans. This bill will make smoking illegal in all public places. “It’s a nasty habit with serious health consequences. We need to protect all our citizens, especially those exposed to second-hand smoke,” said Rep. O’Brien.



Push comes to shove

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Shanna Tobin introduced Senate Bill 6661, which addresses the issue of overcrowded public schools. “The bill is a good one because it will improve student-teacher relationships and create smaller learning environments,” Sen. Tobin. In Southern California, students skip meals and delay going to the restroom because the lines are longer than the lunch period. Rushing to get to class on time, mobs of students fight their way through narrow doors and cramped hallways, often enduring shoves, bruises, dirty looks and loud obscenities from frustrated peers. This bill will fund the building of small schools in districts with large schools.



Bill aims to end marijuana prohibition



Olympia—House Bill 2222 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Claire Nishida and Molly Tokuda. “This bill addresses the issue of illegal drugs and will reduce the confusion and wasted money we spend on the prosecution of marijuana users,” said Rep. Nishida. Current marijuana laws are counterproductive, according to the legislators. They contend that marijuana does not cause long term health problems. “Many who smoke the drug have no adverse health effects, unlike those who partake in crystal meth, alcohol, and even legal prescribed drugs,” said Rep. Tokuda. This bill will legalize the growing, possessing, and sale of marijuana.

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Washington adopts single shot lethal injection

Olympia—House Bill 2947 was introduced yesterday by Representative Davis Turpin. “This bill addresses the issue of lethal injections used in administering the death penalty in our state,” said Rep. Turpin. The bill proposes use of a much simpler one-shot drug. Currently the state uses a 3-drug cocktail which can result in a cruel, torturous death. “If the first shot or second shot fails to work properly, the victim may be unable to communicate the excruciating pain that is experienced when the final shot is administered. Even veterinarians have done away with this multi-shot system and opt for a single, more humane overdose for animals. Shouldn’t we do the same for a human life,” said Rep. Turpin.



U.S. Senator Patty Murray speaks to pages



Monday was a special day for the late afternoon class when U.S. Senator Patty Murray greeted the Senate and House pages during the last 20 minutes of class. Sen. Murray was the first woman elected to the Senate from Washington State. “When I was elected in 1992, there were only two women in the Senate. Now, there are 17,” she said. Currently in her third term, she spoke about how she got interested in politics and the challenge that she faced when a state legislator told her in the 1980s that she was just a “mom in tennis shoes” and was not going to make a difference in the pre-school issue she was passionately pursuing. She led a grassroots coalition of 13,000 parents to save a local preschool program from budget cuts and then was elected to the Washington State Senate in 1988 and the U.S. Senate in 1992.



8 Washington State Legislature

Guest speakers visit Page School

Rep. Brad Klippert, Sen. Dan Swecker, Rep. Roger Goodman, and Rep. Terry Nealey joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. The speakers talked about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about their jobs. Pages were able to interact with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker's questions.



Page program 109 years old

The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served in past years. The first female page served



in 1937. In the past, pages were required to do ironing and cleaning for members. Today, there duties are a bit more professional. Pages are an integral part of the

workings of the legislature, delivering important bills, messages, and sometimes a legislator's lunch!



Page School on the web The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool> This newsletter has been posted there.

